

Highlights

\$1.5 Million GAO Management Audit Gives GPO High Marks For Service

A General Accounting Office-sponsored management audit of GPO in 1998 found “unanimous” and “universal” support for GPO’s in-house production, printing procurement, and depository library distribution services, and offered a variety of recommendations to improve these and other GPO programs, according to a report prepared by Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc.

Citing congressional satisfaction with product quality and timely dependability of delivery, executive agency satisfaction with printing procurement services, and broad public support for free access to Government information through GPO’s depository libraries, the \$1.5 million review was conducted in response to directions contained in the conference report to the FY 1998 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act. The report was funded by GPO’s revolving fund.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees directed the GAO to “include an objective evaluation” of GPO’s documents sales program, printing procurement program, in-house production operations, personnel management activities, financial systems, and information technology programs. The GAO was specifically instructed that its work “should not be encumbered by presupposing that GPO’s current operations . . . cannot be changed.” The audit was performed between December 1997 and April 1998.

The auditors found strong support in Congress for GPO’s in-house production operations for congressional printing, stating that GPO’s production area “consistently meets a demanding congressional production schedule” and that “GPO effectively satisfies its priority congressional customers and meets the variable demands and outputs requested by Congress.” According to the report, GPO’s “production functions are geared toward rapid and consistent turnout of congressional products” and are “flexible and responsive to changing congressional needs.”

In addition, the report said GPO has “developed strong and cordial relationships with their contacts within congressional organizations and offices” and that GPO’s “communication with the congressional customer is frequent and regular.” The audit reviewed the feasibility of privatizing the production of the *Congressional Record* but was inconclusive on any savings and suggested further study would be required. Moreover, it “found little support among congressional staff for relinquishing control of the in-plant production capability of GPO.”

The auditors found “universal support” among executive branch agencies for GPO’s printing procurement program. The report said “these agencies viewed this service that GPO provides as an example of ‘Government at its best,’ and none of them felt that they wanted or could do this function better than GPO.”

“GPO’s timely and responsive services to Congress” are viewed as “a universal strength;” GPO’s printing procurement services are called “Government at its best;” and there is “strong support” for GPO’s depository library program.

– Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Inc.

The report said GPO's depository library program "is well managed, provides a valuable public service, and is respected by the library community." The auditors also found strong support for GPO to make an increasing amount of Government information available electronically, free of charge, over the Internet and praised the success of *GPO Access*.

The Booz-Allen report said *GPO Access* "is one of the Federal Government's largest and most active websites" and suggested that GPO seek additional funds from Congress to expand this program. In addition, the report said "GPO has successfully implemented new I/T (information technology) capabilities in many parts of the organization."

The report contained a number of specific recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of GPO's programs. Many of the recommendations addressed the need for investment to offset the effects of reduced spending and downsizing pursued by GPO in recent years. By year-end, action was underway on approximately 75 percent of the recommendations. The audit report is available online via the GAO's website.

GPO Access Selected As One Of The "Best Feds On The Web"

GPO Access was named one of the "Best Feds on the Web" by *Government Executive* magazine in 1998, adding to the list of awards garnered by this popular website.

GPO Access was one of just 15 Federal websites to be selected for this award. In 1997, the General Accounting Office identified 4,300 websites in the Federal Government (GAO, "Internet and Electronic Dial-Up Bulletin Boards: Information Reported by Federal Organizations" GAO/GGD-97-86, 6/16/97). *GPO Access* was the only website in the legislative branch to be selected.

In making its selections, *Government Executive* said it picked "the sites we thought went above and beyond the typical 'home page' . . . Some of the better known and flashier Federal sites didn't make the list because we felt they didn't go the extra mile to serve their customers." To be designated one of the "Best Feds on the Web," *Government Executive* said each site had to:

- provide excellent customer service to the public by having a well-designed site that includes a large amount of useful information;
- use the Web to improve business practices in their agencies or across Government; and
- make use of new technologies that other Federal sites should consider emulating.

Government Executive said *GPO Access* "provides free electronic access to a wealth of important information published by the Government. The site offers Government information databases for online use, individual Federal agency files available for downloading, and tools to assist in finding Federal information and user

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